

REMARKS

The Office action mailed December 30, 2005, has been received and its contents carefully noted. Claims 1-10 are pending. The pending claims, claims 1, 3-4 (as dependent on claim 1), were rejected. Claims 2, 3-4 (as dependent on claim 2) and 5-10 were objected to but were found allowable over the prior art if rewritten in independent form. By this Response, claims 2-9 have been amended and claim 1 has been canceled. Support may be found in the specification and the claims as originally filed. No statutory new matter has been added. Therefore, reconsideration and entry of the claims as amended are respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) and 103(a)

The Examiner rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Nishio (US 6,322,338) and claims 3-4 (dependent from claim 1) under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishio in view of Neal et al. (US 4,442,957). The Examiner, however, indicated that claims 2, 3 (dependent from claim 2), 4 (dependent from claim 2) and 5-10 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 has been canceled and claims 2, 5, and 8 have been amended to be in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims and the remaining claims depend thereon.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully assert that the claims, as amended, are novel and unobvious and the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) and 103(a) should properly be withdrawn.

Request for Interview

Applicants respectfully request either a telephonic or an in-person interview should there be any remaining issues.

CONCLUSION

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

It is not believed that extensions of time are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in accompanying documents. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to prevent abandonment of this application, then such extensions of time are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a), and any fees required therefor are hereby authorized to be charged to **Deposit Account No. 02-4300**, Attorney Docket No. **033856M003**.

Respectfully submitted,
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